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## Jack-of-all Trades Cookbook

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*The Most-Used Thing  
In Grandmother's Kitchen Was Her...*

# Jack-of-all-Trades Cookbook

by Barbara Short

BACK IN the 1800's, when the homemaker was automatically given the role of everything from doctor to druggist, the cookbook had an honored place on the bookshelf. Besides recipes and menus, it gave advice on a variety of family problems including etiquette, money, cleaning and also such things as how to make paste and cement.

Here are some excerpts from those old cookbooks.

W. A. Henderson, author of *Modern Domestic Cookery and Useful Receipt Book* which was published in 1844, says "Females should be early taught to prefer the society of their homes, to engage themselves in domestic duties, and to avoid every species of idle vanity, to which thousands of them owe their ruin; and, above all things, to consider their parents as their best friends."

"Grand Ptisah, or Diet Drink of Health and Longevity, by a celebrated French Physician, who lived nearly a hundred and twenty years," was included in the section on household hints. It consists of oats, succory roots, crystal mineral and honey. Henderson tells his readers how to breed gold and silver fish, how to waterproof cloth and fireproof paper, how to make vinegars and wines, cement and cleaning fluid, among other things.

His "Composition for Restoring Scorched Linen" says to "boil in half a pint of vinegar, 2 ounces of fullers' earth, an ounce of hen's dung, half an ounce of cake soap, and the juice of two onions. Spread . . . over the whole of the damaged part."

Miss Corson's *Cooking Manual of Practical Directions for Economical Every-day Cookery*, published in 1877, recommends filtered water for the invalid. "Put a quart of clear water over the fire, and just bring it to a boil; remove it, and strain it three or four times through flannel; then cool it in a covered jar or pitcher, and give it to the patient in small quantities as the condition requires."

"Never give medicine to a very young child . . . If medicine must be given at all, give it to the nurse," is the belief of the author of the *Ladies Indispensible Assistant*, published in 1853. For a burn or scald, the cookbook says to "burn the inside sole of an old shoe to ashes and sprinkle the ashes on the affected parts."

In the section titled "Etiquette for Ladies and Gentlemen," one reads, "A gentleman may hook a dress or lace a shoe with perfect propriety and should be able to do so gracefully." Under "General Rules of Behavior," is included "Spit as little as possible and never upon the floor," and "Meeting an acquaintance among strangers — in the street, or a coffeehouse, never address him by name. It is vulgar and annoying."

The author gives men the following rules. "A gentleman having met a lady at social parties, accompanied by her to and from church, may desire to become more intimately acquainted . . . You wish to commence formal addresses. What will you do? Why, taking some good opportunity, you will say, 'Miss Wilson, since I became acquainted with you, I have been every day more pleased with your society . . . if you are not otherwise engaged, will you permit me to visit you tomorrow evening?'"

"If her friends have not been consulted, as they usually are before matters proceed so far, she may say: 'I am sensible of your kindness, sir: but I cannot consent to a private interview, without consulting my family.'"

The author of *The New American Book*, published in 1899, exhibits the spirit of Iowa State College, which began offering home economics courses 26 years before, when she says, "One day when I was tired and my dish-cloths looked rather gray, I turned a few drops of ammonia into the water, and rubbed them out, and found it acted like a charm; and I shall be sure to do so again some day."

Under the heading, "Household Hints and Recipes," was included "Paste for scrap-books — Put in plenty of alum. It will prevent moth or mice."

"To Clean Woolen Dresses — take cornmeal and water, and boil it the same as for mush; put the dress with enough water and the mush to wash it; rinse it in clear water, and hang it up to dry without wringing, to keep it from being wrinkled; iron it on the wrong side before it is quite dry."

The author reminds us "that the wings of turkeys, geese and chickens should never be thrown away. Many people, especially in the country, keep them to brush off the stove or range, but there is nothing better to wash and clean windows."